

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184475

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PGOV, KS, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT OF CONGRESSMEN HAMILTON AND SPENCE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER FROM HOUSE LEADERSHIP TO
PRESIDENT PARK:

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

WE ARE INFORMED THAT THERE IS CONCERN AMONG SOME OFFICERS
OF YOUR GOVERNMENT WHO QUESTION THE ADVISABILITY OF YOUR
RECEIVING OUR PERSONAL EMISSARIES, THE HONORABLE LEE H.
HAMILTON AND THE HONORABLE FLOYD D. SPENCE, WHOM WE ARE
SENDING TO EXPRESS PERSONALLY TO YOU OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR
ASSISTANCE IN THE RESOLUTION OF A PROBLEM THAT THREATENS
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TO UNDERMINE THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR CITIZENS IN THE U.S.
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND TO ACT AS A LONG-TERM IRRI-
TANT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR NATIONS. WE FIRMLY BELIEVE,
MR. PRESIDENT, THAT IT WOULD BE TRAGIC IF THE OPPORTUNITY
IS LOST TO COMMUNICATE PERSONALLY TO YOU THE VIEWS AND
THE DEPTH OF FEELING OF THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP ON THIS
SUBJECT.

PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THIS BETWEEN YOUR REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON AND OUR COUNSELORS CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED MISCONDUCT BY AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INCONCLUSIVE.

BOTH SIDES HAVE WORKED DILIGENTLY AND IN GOOD FAITH TO REACH AN ACCORD, BUT UP UNTIL NOW YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS DECLINED TO GIVE US ASSURANCES THAT MR. KIM DONG JO, A CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, WILL PROVIDE US WITH ANY NAMES OF CONGRESSMEN TO WHOM HE MADE CASH GIFTS. THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR A DIALOGUE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND YOUR GOVERNMENT. IT IS OUR FERVENT HOPE THAT YOUR GRANTING AN AUDIENCE TO TWO OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED AND RESPECTED MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WHO ARE FULLY AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK ON OUR BEHALF, WILL LEAD PROMPTLY TO THE SOLVING OF THE DIFFICULT ISSUES THAT HAVE PLAGUED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR NATIONS FOR TOO LONG.

OUR EMISSARIES WILL TRAVEL TO SEOUL TO PLACE OUR REQUEST BEFORE YOU FOR ONE REASON--OUR BELIEF THAT YOU ARE THE ONE PERSON WHO CAN ACT EFFECTIVELY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM THAT IS FACING BOTH OF OUR NATIONS AND THAT, ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD FROM OUR EMISSARIES YOU WILL ACT TO DO SO.

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MR. KIM IS IN POSSESSION OF INFORMATION THAT WILL ENABLE DESIGNATED OFFICERS HERE TO COMPLETE THE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED MISCONDUCT BY MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. THIS INVESTIGATION, WE EMPHASIZE, DOES NOT PERTAIN TO THE CONDUCT OF KOREAN CITIZENS OR TO THE INTENTIONS OR ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE BY MR. KIM ONLY WITH RESPECT TO THE TRUTH OF CHARGES OF MISCONDUCT BY U.S. CONGRESSMEN WILL ACCOMMODATE OUR MUTUAL DESIRE TO AVOID ANY AFFRONT TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND WOULD, INSTEAD CONFIRM TO THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THE VITALITY OF OUR LONG-STANDING ALLIANCE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REALIZE ALSO THAT VOLUNTARY AND FORTHRIGHT DISCLOSURE BY MR. KIM UNDER PROCEDURES DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT TO HIM, WOULD BE THE FINAL STEP, BOTH FOR THE U.S. AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, IN A PROCESS THAT HAS GONE ON FAR TOO LONG.

MR. PRESIDENT, THE INVESTIGATION WILL SOON BE OVER. THE DECISION TO GRANT OUR REQUEST CANNOT BE IMPOSED UPON YOU AND IS WITHIN YOUR CLEAR AUTHORITY TO DENY. WE COME TO YOU NOT AS ADVERSARIES AND OUR EMISSARIES WILL DEMAND

NOTHING FROM YOU. RATHER, WE COME TO YOU AS THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF YOUR NATION'S ALLY

AND FRIEND. WE ASK FOR YOUR HELP IN A DARK HOUR, BUT WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUTUAL INTEREST THAT OUR NATIONS HAVE PURSUED IN THE PAST AND SHOULD PURSUE IN THE FUTURE. WITHOUT YOUR HELP, OUR NATION WILL SUFFER INTERNALLY AND THE STRENGTH OF OUR ALLIANCE WILL REMAIN IN DOUBT.

OUR HOPE AND BELIEF IS THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE OUR EMISSARIES AND, HAVING HEARD THEM, THAT YOU WILL ACCOMMODATE OUR REQUEST.

SINCERELY,
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THOMAS P. O'NEILL
THE SPEAKER
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JOHN J. RHODES
MINORITY LEADER
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

END TEXT

2. EMBASSY COUNSELOR PARK CALLED ON BLAKEMORE, JULY 20, TO SAY IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY SEOUL TO ASSESS THE RELATIVE MERITS OF AGREEING TO A PARK/HAMILTON-SPENCE MEETING. SEOUL SOUGHT HIS VIEWS ON THREE POINTS:

A. IS THIS THE FINAL CHAPTER?

B. CAN THE ROKG BE CONFIDENT THE PRESIDENT WILL NOT BE CONFRONTED WITH ANY SURPRISES, E.G. THREATS, DEMONSTRATIONS OF EVIDENCE KIM DONG-JO COULD CORROBORATE, OR OTHER THEATRICALS?

C. SHOULD PRESIDENT PARK NOT MAKE ANY NEW CONCESSIONS, CAN THE ROKG EXPECT THAT PUBLIC TREATMENT OF THE MISSION AFTER THE FACT WILL BE BALANCED, AND THAT PRESIDENT PARK WILL NOT BE PERSONALLY SLANDERED, E.G. "HE REJECTED THE APPEAL BEFORE WE HAD FINISHED MAKING IT."

PARK ASKED IF WE COULD PROVIDE ASSURANCES FROM THE SPEAKER ON THESE POINTS.

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3. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH PETER WHITE, WE MADE CLEAR TO PARK THAT THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP IS NOT ENGAGED IN A CHARADE; AT THE SAME TIME THEY DO NOT EXPECT ANY COMMITMENT IN ADVANCE EXCEPT THAT PRESIDENT PARK WOULD BE PREPARED TO LISTEN TO WHAT HAMILTON AND SPENCE HAVE TO SAY.

4. WE THEN SAID THAT THE HOUSE LEADERS WERE SENDING A LETTER TO PRESIDENT PARK WHICH WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS IS A FINAL EFFORT AND THAT THERE WILL BE NO SURPRISES. WITH REGARD TO PRESS TREATMENT, WE SAID THERE WOULD BE BALANCED REPORTING WITHOUT POLEMICS.

5. PARK WAS SUFFICIENTLY REASSURED BY THESE AND SAID HE WOULD SEND A POSITIVE REPORT TO SEOUL. YOU SHOULD NOT LET THE ROK KNOW THAT PARK CONSULTED US BEFORE MAKING HIS REPORT. VANCE

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